

## PRESS RELEASE

### The Manila Galleon in Acapulco Exhibit at the Met Museum

In 1565, a trade route between the Spanish East Indies (the Philippines) and New Spain (Mexico) started with the discovery of the ocean passage by Andres de Urdaneta. The trade route became the passage way of what would later be known as the Galleon Trade. The Manila Galleon, one of the most important trading systems at that time, was a great source of income for the colonies (Philippines and Mexico) and Spain. It facilitated the transfer of goods among Europe and Asian and Latin American colonies. In addition to the goods, it facilitated the exchange of peoples and their ideas, customs and lifestyle among the participating economies.

The trade between Manila and Acapulco, which normally took three to four months, flourished and would end only in 1815, a few years before Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821. It was a lucrative trade that was protected by the colonists in the Philippines and the merchants in Seville who petitioned King Philip II to have the *Casa de Contratación* (House of Trade) protect the monopoly. In the Galleon trade, Asian goods such as Chinese silk, spices from Moluccas, Japanese lacquerware and Philippine cotton textiles were shipped to Acapulco, and eventually to Europe, in exchange for silver from New Spain. It attracted to Manila local and Asian merchants especially Chinese from Fujian Province who had brought ivory, porcelain and silk, items that were in demand in the Americas and Europe at that time. In return, some Mexican crops and animals were introduced to the Philippines such as corn, potato, cotton and tobacco.

This important trade will be relived through a landmark exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Manila which is set to open on October 9. The exhibition, The Manila Galleon in Acapulco, recreates in the most authentic way possible the feel of the period and the trade through its ambience-setting designs, select trade goods and Mexican items, such as ceramics and utensils. In addition to the commodities or tangible goods, the exhibition also re-transmits the complex trans-cultural assimilation that happened among the peoples of the Far East, Europe and the Americas.

An important section in the exhibition is the Society and Religion section which features the Altar of the Virgin of Guadalupe and the images of the brown-skinned Virgin of Guadalupe. The Virgin of Guadalupe, which is considered the Patroness of the Philippine Islands, was sent to the Philippines from Mexico in 1648 through the Galleon Trade. The image and what it represents garnered a strong, local devotion among the locals, such as in Pagsanjan, Bohol and in Makati.

The Manila Galleon in Acapulco

October 8 – December 10, 2012

Upper Galleries

The Manila Galleon in Acapulco is an initiative of the Embassy of Mexico with the assistance of the Gobierno del Estado de Guerrero, Instituto Guerrerense de la Cultura, Guerrero Cumple and the Conaculta or the Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes.

The exhibition will run until December 10, 2012 at the Upper Galleries, Metropolitan Museum of Manila. The Museum is located at the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Complex, Roxas Boulevard, Manila. Museum hours are from 9am – 6pm, Monday to Saturday; closed on Sundays and first Mondays of the month and on holidays. For information, call 708-7829 or visit [www.metmuseum.ph](http://www.metmuseum.ph). Follow us in facebook: metmuseum.manila